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# WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK INTO THE VFX, GAMES OR ANIMATION INDUSTRIES?

BY DR IAN PALMER,  
Director, Escape Studios

## VFX

VFX careers are on the rise. VFX companies desire artists that have the right skills and potential to grow in their careers to create the dynamic imagery directors require. The demand for both 2D and 3D operators has always been high in all areas of VFX such as broadcast, films, and advertising. It is especially prevalent nowadays because of the increased demand of high standards in visual effects for broadcast TV series internationally e.g. Game of Thrones and Dr Who, to name a couple of examples.

To break into your first job in 2D VFX, you need to demonstrate a good grasp of the fundamental compositing techniques on your showreel. One of the exciting parts about being a compositor is that you're the linchpin that brings all the elements together adding that creative finessing needed to produce the polished final shot, so you'll need to have a creative flare for composition, design, light and colour to balance all the 2D elements you will be working with. Showing keying and

compositing photo-realistic CG rendered elements will also get your reel to stand out in the competition. Only show your best work, even if it's just two shots! "Less is more" is what recruiters at all post houses say to aspiring compositors and you'll need the desire and drive to create the final polished product/imagery to a high standard.

To break into the 3D industry takes real commitment and a lot of hard work. You can start out as a runner for a facility in order to learn on the job; this used to be the only way in before the emergence of training providers. The next best option is to prepare a strong showreel that can illustrate your skills. Industry professionals tend to not only look for good technical work but also seek people with a good eye for colour and composition. After all, in this industry stories are told and emotions are conveyed through the use of stunning imagery.



We are always looking for talented individuals to join our team in all areas, and at the moment our most urgent needs are in Animation, Environments and Creature FX.

AMY SMITH  
Global Head of Recruitment,  
Framestore

## ANIMATION

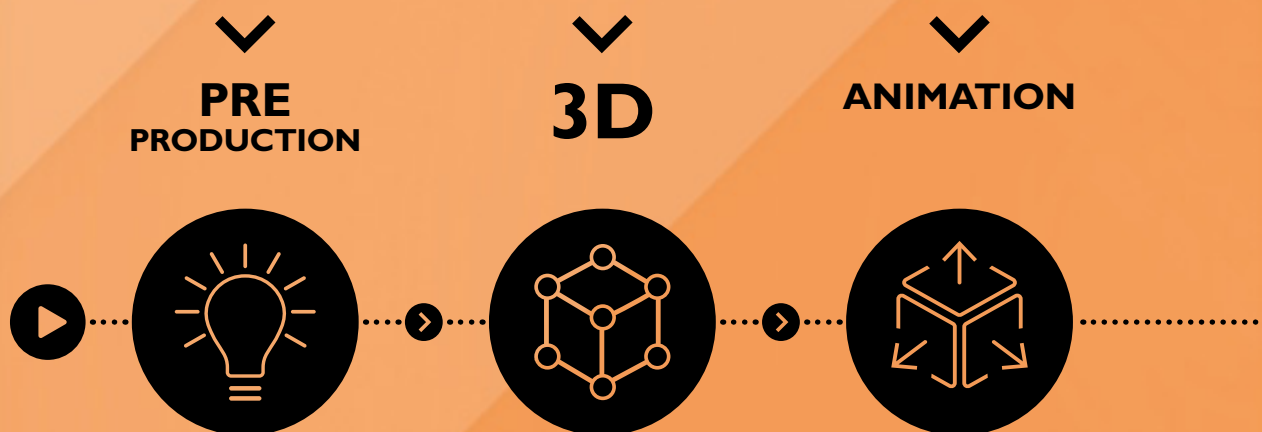
Animators have been described as “actors with a pencil or a computer”. Animators bring characters and creatures to life, breathing life into them and making them give a performance—just like actors do. Successful animators must be good technicians, to understand all the digital tools available, but they must also be creative, inventive artists who make characters interesting and fun to watch. Animators must learn the craft of acting as well as the latest techniques of digital wizardry and be able to demonstrate those skills in order to break into the industry.

## GAMES

There are no shortcuts to becoming a great games artist, just lots of hard work and dedication to create a portfolio of impressive work. Your game art should show a variety of approaches and styles. If there is a specific games developer you would like to work for make sure you understand what they are about, tailoring your work to the studio style can really help you get that foot in the door.



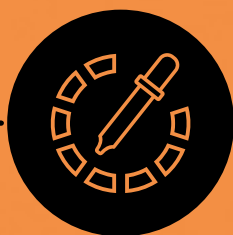
# THE VFX PIPELINE



✓  
**2D**

✓  
**FINISHING**

✓  
**LAUNCH**





# VFX PATHWAYS



MARK SPEVICK  
Head of 3D,  
Escape Studios

## Interested in getting into 3D VFX?

3D graphic production is a huge umbrella term for many skills within the computer graphics industry; skills are as diverse as painting to writing computer code. There are jobs to cater for everyone; if you're an artist there are careers to be found in texture painting or digital sculpting and modelling. Animation is for people with a sense of timing and character acting. FX artists and TD are for those with more of a technical background where scripting and computer simulation skills are important. 3D is so large and diverse that sometimes people find themselves doing a bit of all the above. It is certainly exciting and challenging and not for the faint of heart!



Mark Spevick, Head of 3D at Escape Studios, has worked on every Gilliam film from Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas to The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus, starring the late Heath Ledger. He also worked with director Martin Campbell on Zorro and Mask of Zorro before supervising on the set of Casino Royale. Most recently, Mark managed the CG team that worked on the parachute scene in Angels and Demons, whilst working for post-house Double Negative.





DAVI STEIN  
Head of 2D,  
Escape Studios

## Interested in getting into 2D VFX?

2D/Compositing artists are in the last department a shot must go through in the VFX pipeline before being finalised by the VFX Supervisor and Director. Since all the elements necessary for the shot culminate here, it is the artist's responsibility to make the shot look totally believable! You'll need an artist's keen trained eye for photorealistic details so that you always create exceptional imagery. The excitement and gratification of producing the end result is an exhilarating position and creative career to grow into.



Davi has an impressive range of compositing experience and works at Escape Studios as our Head of 2D. Davi was Senior Compositor on *The Dark Knight*, *Where The Wild Things Are*, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* and *Australia*. She also composited the Davy Jones character for *Pirates of the Caribbean 2: Dead Man's Chest* and the Hall of Prophecies sequence for *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. Last but not least, Davi was also part of the incredible teams that worked on *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions*.







## GET INTO ANIMATION

### What does the role of an animator involve?

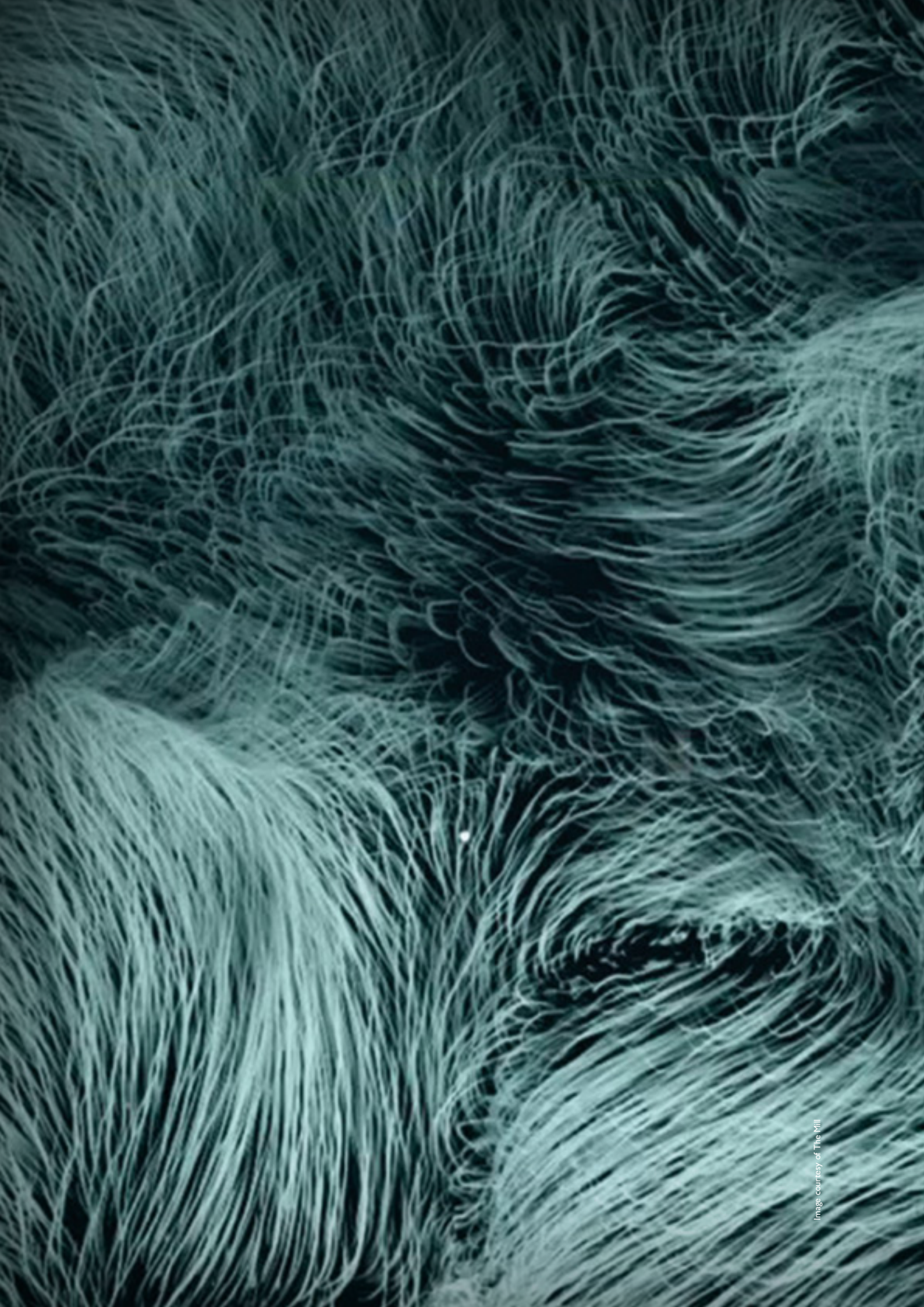
Animation is one of the fastest growing parts of the entertainment industry, having gone from a small cottage industry just a few short decades ago to a multi-billion dollar industry with creative centres all over the globe. The UK has some of the best animation studios in the world, including Aardman Animation (of Wallace and Gromit fame), Blue Zoo, and companies like Framestore which compete globally to produce some of the finest character and creature animation in the world. There has never been a better time to enter the animation industry, and bring your own characters to life.



Alex Williams, Head of Animation at Escape Studios, is a cartoonist and animator whose film credits include Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, The Lion King, The Iron Giant, the three latest Harry Potter films, and The Chronicles of Narnia. He has worked for many studios including Disney, DreamWorks, Fox, Warner Bros, and Sony. Alex also draws the weekly cartoon strip Queen's Counsel which appears on Thursdays in The Times.



ALEX WILLIAMS  
Head of Animation,  
Escape Studios





## GET INTO MOTION GRAPHICS

Motion Graphics is a term surrounded by controversy, nobody agrees on a definition but it serves to encapsulate under a name, a bunch of creators who use 2D, 3D, live action, animation, stop-motion and different techniques to create imaginative images in motion.

We live surrounded by motion graphics. Walking on the street, watching television, in our mobile and tablet, playing a video game, watching a movie, even taking the tube, screens all around us contain videos full of graphics where we can not avoid watching images in motion pumping into our eyes.

The industry is demanding more and more motion designers, people who can create those animations. From film production companies to advertising or marketing agencies as well as small creative studios, digital agencies or start ups, are demanding more and more that specific profile. Do you want to be the next one?

Thiago, Head of Motion Graphics at Escape Studios, is the founder and creative director of motion graphics company, Cookie Studio. Thiago's journey started in Brazil, where he found his passion for design and animation. He then moved to London to work with some of the most established animation studios and brands, including MTV, Nokia, Samsung, BBC and Nickelodeon. Thiago is also the co-founder of the See No Evil events, bringing together the best and most talented artists of the industry.



THIAGO MAYA  
Head of Motion Graphics,  
Escape Studios

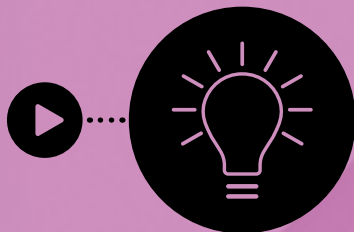




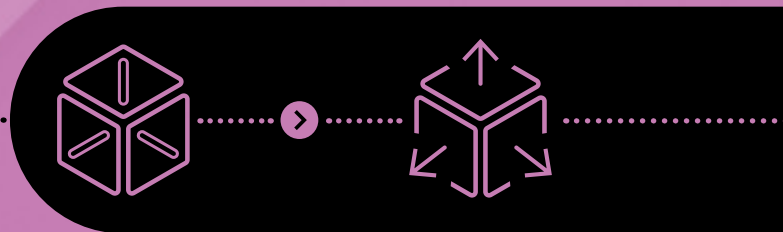
# THE GAMES PIPELINE



**PRE  
PRODUCTION**



**ART DEPARTMENT**



▼  
**TESTING**

▼  
**LAUNCH**



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The industry is getting very competitive and is constantly growing and changing. So don't give up if you send 10 CVs and no one replies to you. Be honest with yourself, keep working on your showreel and try new things.

ALESSANDRO PIERI  
Escapee Roto/Prep Supervisor,  
Double Negative





## THE WORLD OF GAMES


The games industry is one of the most creative, diverse and exciting industries for a digital artist to work in today. As a games artist you could be creating stunning worlds, characters or props in styles ranging from the realistic to cartoony or anywhere in-between. One of the greatest things about being a games artist is that you never stop learning and are always looking at the latest techniques and tools which means the job never gets boring. Fortunately it's almost impossible not to improve on a daily basis as you will be working alongside some very skilled people across all the disciplines of games, from designers, animators and programmers to name just a few. There is nothing quite like the thrill of creating some artwork and then seeing it in the game and playable.



Simon is Head of Games at Escape Studios and has worked as a professional artist for 13 years, producing 3D graphics in many forms, from models and environments to effects and animation. After graduating from a fine art background, Simon joined Sony Computer Entertainment's London studio, and worked in senior and lead roles on nine published titles including Total NBA '97, This is Football, Getaway, Black Monday, Kinetic, Kinetic Combat and Sony Playstation Home.



**SIMON FENTON**  
Head of Games,  
Escape Studios


A man in a dark coat is walking on a path that leads towards a fiery industrial background. The path is a mix of dark gravel and orange-brown dirt. The background features large flames and smoke, suggesting a factory or industrial site on fire. The overall color palette is dominated by oranges, yellows, and greys.

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OF INCOME-  
GENERATION AND  
JOB CREATION**

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UN REPORT ON CREATIVE ECONOMY





## **WHEN SEARCHING FOR A CAREER IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY, IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.**

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Escape Studios has been at the forefront of creative education for over 15 years, offering courses in Visual Effects (VFX), Games, Animation and Motion Graphics. Since opening our doors in 2002, we have turned students' passion and ambition into studio ready skills.

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THE DETAIL**

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